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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 19, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable PHIL GINGREY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for 5 minutes.

IRAQIS MUST ASSUME MORE RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I am very concerned about Iraq. Very concerned. The weather vane of the Iraqi fight has shifted clearly to the Iraqis. It is theirs to win or lose. General John Abizaid stated yesterday, "It's very, very clear that in order to win in Iraq, the Iraqis have to assume more and more responsibility."

Last week, there were two developments in Iraq that I feel need to be

highlighted. First, the Marine Corps' chief of intelligence in Iraq has reportedly described the situation in the Sunni-dominated Anbar province as "politically" lost to al Qaeda. The second is the plan to secure Baghdad from the insurgents by encircling it with, for lack of a better word, a moat. The idea of a moat went out of style in the middle ages. Both of these reports paint a less than rosy picture of how we are faring in this war that has already cost so much in blood and treasure. These two developments indicate that our level of effort is insufficient to maintain control of the country.

On the basis of these and other reports, some analysts determined that the solution to our problems in Baghdad and the Anbar province is to send more troops to Iraq. This might sound like a plausible course of action except for the fundamental problem that there are no more units to send to Iraq. Oh, certainly we can surge units forward into combat, but there is no way we can sustain that increase for any significant period of time. The administration's poor planning and poor strategic choices in Iraq have depleted our military of equipment and manpower. Iraq has become a black hole, sapping our strategic base of resources. The readiness situation has become so bad that our nondeployed combat brigades report that if called today, they may not be fully ready to complete all of their wartime missions.

The fact that our ground force readiness has fallen to such a dangerous level risks emboldening our enemies both in Iraq and elsewhere in the world. We must act now to reverse this decline. Certainly spending more money on Army and Marine Corps readiness will help. The Congress has provided additional funds to reset Army and Marine Corps equipment. But even with that increased funding, it will take some time for our units to get healthy again. I also strongly urge

the administration to submit a budget that realistically reflects the services' needs.

But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, additional money will not be enough. We do not have the luxury of staying the course. The conflict in Iraq has depleted our ground forces and placed this country at strategic risk. We must start making significant progress in Iraq now, and the best way to do it is by transitioning the responsibility for Iraqi security to the Iraqis. I urge the administration to redouble its efforts to train and equip the Iraqi security forces.

COMBATING CORRUPTION REQUIRES EXPANDING FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 31, 2006, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, according to the State Department, international corruption costs American companies that play by the rules many billions of dollars in lost exports. Corruption impedes government efforts to deliver basic efforts to citizens, weakens confidence in democracy, and is often linked to international criminal activity. It causes rampant economic inefficiency, interferes with capital markets, and obviously contributes to poverty.

Transparency International is a global not-for-profit organization dedicated to the fight against corruption. Transparency puts out annual reports on the state of corruption worldwide, trying to measure whether we are winning or losing that fight.

This fight is a top priority for the U.S. Departments of State, Justice and Commerce. My colleagues, since 1979, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, has had a convention against corruption

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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and continues to see it as a top global priority. All this reflects a growing international consensus that corruption is a problem that we must confront. That much is true. But working on anticorruption campaigns, all these entities treat the symptoms rather than the disease. The disease is oppression and lawlessness. The cure is freedom and the rule of law.

The annual Index of Economic Freedom, compiled by the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal, provides a simple framework for understanding how open countries are to competition; the degree of state intervention in the economy, whether through taxation, spending or overregulation; and the strength and independence of a country's judiciary to enforce rules and protect private property.

One of the indicators in the index is the size of a nation's "informal," or black market economy, which helps to measure this corruption. Charting the relationship between economic freedom and the size of the informal economy as a percentage of GDP, the Heritage Foundation found a positive correlation between these two factors. They reported, "as economic freedom vanishes, the informal economy takes a larger share of GDP. The size of the informal economy in economically unfree and repressed economies is almost three times the size of the informal economy in free economies, and almost double the size of the informal economy in mostly free economies." The Heritage calculations demonstrate the perverse effect of economic repression on the moral behavior of simple, ordinary people and the continuation of the cycle of poverty that entraps them.

Access to credit in most developed countries is the key to a better standard of living. That access is incumbent upon proving income or property, for which you need a formal job and a legal title to that property.

When it is difficult for people to invest in business, whether a corner grocery store or a major factory, formal jobs are hard to come by. Jobs can be more easily had in the informal economy, where small and medium entrepreneurs can negotiate salaries and benefits, and tie them to performance. In cases like this, the government bureaucracy encumbers legal businesses, encouraging employers and employees to operate in the shadows.

Without a formal job, you can still get credit if you have titled property to offer as collateral. But while Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto has shown that most of the poorest people in the developing world own property, they face innumerable bureaucratic hurdles in order to actually title that property as their own. In Peru, he says, "to obtain legal authorization to build a house on state-owned land took 6 years and 11 months. To obtain a legal title for that piece of land took 728 steps." Other countries are similarly ridicu-

lous. In Egypt, it takes 77 steps in 31 government offices and anywhere from 6 to 14 years. In the Philippines, it takes 168 steps through 53 offices and anywhere from 13 to 25 years to get legal title to this property.

An oppressive government system perpetuates the poverty of its citizens by making it impossible to claim their property rights and pursue legal employment. Equally important, the Heritage Foundation says that the resulting black market economy "creates a culture of contempt for the law and fosters corruption and bribery in the public sector as a necessary means to navigate the bureaucracy."

Mr. Speaker, when those folks, particularly international elites, take on corruption, they see it as just one more corporate scandal to be uncovered and think that will be that and we can fix it. One more capitalistic crime, they call it, that must be prosecuted. That is not it. That is not it at all. In reality, corruption indicates a simple lack of freedom and, more importantly, a consistent rule of law.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron, Archbishop of Agana, Guam, offered the following prayer:

Almighty and eternal God, whose goodness fills our hearts with joy and whose love permeates our daily lives, You are blessed for bringing us together to work in harmony, in peace, and in justice. Send Your blessings upon our United States House of Representatives, who generously devote themselves to the work of our Nation and territories in the laws they pass and the resolutions they create.

In times of difficulty, challenge and need, grant them the strength to transcend personal interests and seek only after the common good for all. Strengthen them, Lord, with Your grace and wisdom so that everything that they do may begin with Your inspiration, may continue with Your guidance and, by You, be happily ended.

Grace us with Your saving presence and aid us with Your constant blessing.

All glory and praise be to You, our ever-living God, forever and ever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. BORDALLO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5684. An act to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, September 19, 2006.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 19, 2006, at 10:25 a.m.:

That the Senate returned the papers to the House pursuant to H. Res. 1011 H.R. 503.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk of the House.

WELCOMING THE MOST REVEREND ANTHONY SABLAN APURON, O.F.M. CAP., D.D. METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF AGANA

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, today, it is my privilege and honor to welcome His Excellency, the Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron, the Archbishop of Metropolitan Archdiocese of Agana, Guam, to this House.

Archbishop Apuron is a man of great faith, wisdom and inspiration. He has shepherded the faithful on Guam, the Northern Marianas, Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands for the past 20 years as our archbishop.

The Catholic Church in the Pacific has blossomed under his leadership,